

When [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”
Luke 4:16-19 (NRSVue)

Beloved Church Family,

In the Gospel story above, we get a glimpse into the start of Jesus’ ministry. In a way, this serves as Jesus’ mission statement – his life’s purpose – according to Luke. Through this icebreaker sermon, Jesus introduced himself and made it clear that he had come to bring good news to those society deems “less than” – the poor, the imprisoned, the disabled, the oppressed. He continued, saying that he had also come to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

Now, we might hear that phrase, “the year of the Lord’s favor”, and assume that it might simply mean a revival of sorts, a time of telling everyone this good news about God. But, “the year of the Lord’s favor” means so much more than that. Specifically, it refers to what the Bible calls a Jubilee year, which was also known as a sabbath of sabbaths. According to the book of Leviticus, every 7th day of the week was held sacred as the sabbath day, every 7th year was held sacred as a sabbath year, and, after 7 sabbath years had passed (7x7 years), the Jubilee year was announced. During this sacred year, it is said that those who were enslaved, indentured, or imprisoned would be released and allowed to go home to their families. Debts would be forgiven. Workers would be given rest. Even the earth was included in this year of relief, as fields would be left fallow, allowing the ground to be replenished along with humanity.

The Jubilee came as God’s way of leveling out the inequalities that had been created over the previous 49-50 years. In a world where economic and social inequality and injustice were systemic and widespread, Jubilee served as a heaven-sent, societal leveling. It wasn’t just about proclaiming how great God was by shouting words of praise or preaching about God’s grace, it was about intentionally living as conduits of God’s grace, mercy, and love in real and tangible ways. Spreading the good news through the words of our mouths is important...but it means little if it isn’t accompanied by living out that same good news through the work of our hands, hearts, and minds. The Jubilee was an opportunity to do just that. It helped us remember that we were not only receivers of God’s forgiveness, but also sharers of that same forgiveness. Jesus left us a reminder of this when he taught us to pray, “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”.



Unfortunately, the tradition of Jubilee has fallen out of practice among the vast majority of the world's believers, and I'm confident that it will not make it onto any official political party platform in my lifetime. Even those who claim to believe in a literal reading of the bible find reasons to disregard the practice of Jubilee. When you think about it, we receive forgiveness from God every day. We humbly, yet gladly, welcome the mercy and grace we receive from God for the countless mistakes we've made and the spiritual weight of guilt that we carry. And what an amazing and liberating feeling that is! But, when it comes to the real-world debts and economic weight people carry in our society, our zest for forgiveness and liberation doesn't extend that far.

As we approach the celebration of Labor Day this year, I have been pondering this mission statement from Jesus and the instructions from God concerning sabbath and jubilee. As a pastor, I'm blessed to encounter all sorts of folks in our wider community. Our office receives calls for assistance through our joint ministry in the Trenton Council of Churches, and we hear, firsthand, the desperation, hopelessness, and unbearable weight that people are feeling. We all know someone (whether we're aware of it or not) who works multiple jobs and still doesn't make enough to live, much less save for the future. We all know someone who, because of needing multiple jobs, works 7 days a week and doesn't get paid time off. We all know someone who is so deeply in debt that they cannot see a way out. We all know someone who is living without access to an adequate level of healthcare simply because their work doesn't provide that benefit. Thinking about these realities with Jesus in mind, I am reminded of the great disparities we have in our society, and the ways we could benefit from even the smallest experience of Jubilee.

This Labor Day, I invite you to join me in taking just a few minutes to think about what Christ might be asking us to do, as his followers, to help live out his mission statement. I doubt that any amount of work from our small, but faithful, congregation will convince the government to inaugurate a Jubilee year, but I do believe amazing things are possible when we work together with the Spirit in our hearts. I believe what we *can* make a difference, no matter how small or insignificant it might seem. God can see the immeasurable difference every act of forgiveness, grace, and mercy makes in the lives of those who receive it, and God can see the way those small acts weave together to create a world that, slowly but surely, looks a little bit more like God's Kingdom. Our still-speaking God is calling. May we listen carefully and dream boldly about what is possible.



With Love and Hope, Pastor Christy Smith



Confirmation Class

Starts Wednesday, September 17

At 7:00 PM

We welcome our new confirmands

St. John Prayer List

Our Local Church Family

Chris Bates	Tish Bates	Lois & Stan Clark	Greg Erdmann
Cathy Haller	Denise Hamilton	Hank Henderson	Pauline Kraemer
Mary Lou Lurtz	Marian Nelson	Lonna Patton	Billie Rinderer
Orville Rinderer	Rogers Family	Lois Winkler	Connie Zimmers

Our Extended Friends & Family

Elaine Dupuis	(Mike Williamson's friend)
Ken Erdmann	(Greg Erdmann's brother)
Shannon Farrell	(Pastor Christy's cousin)
Sylvia Hoerchler	(Curt Wesselmann's aunt)
Michelle Toennies	(Deb and Dan Athmer's niece)
Gary & Carol Weshinsky	(Laura Wesselmann's father & mother)
Craig & Lori Wheeler	(Kimberly & Ron Tremmel's friends)
Josh Williamson	(Mike Williamson's son)
Dean Zurliene	(Curt Wesselmann's uncle)



Pastor Christy is usually in the office Tuesday - Friday from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM but will make appointments if needed. Contact her by calling her cell phone at 618-973-3040. Beverly Adams, office administrator, will usually be in the office 9 AM to 3 PM, Monday through Friday, but her schedule may vary. Contact her at stjohntrenton@gmail.com or call 224-9828.



Birthday Blessings

Connie Zimmers Sept. 1	Madeline Truscott Sept. 17
Kevin Kunz Sept. 2	Dan Athmer Sept. 18
Betty Sappington Sept. 5	Kameron Fisher Sept. 19
Tyler Davis Sept. 8	Collin Henderson Sept. 20
Lana Tobin Sept. 8	Bella Johnson Sept. 23
Emily Fisher Ootem Sept. 10	Maggie Gerstner Sept. 25
Eileen Hoffmann Sept. 13	Heather Johnson Sept. 25
Derek Von Bokel Sept. 13	Marilyn Wehrle Sept. 25
Deanna Lucas Sept. 15	Dustin Atwood Sept. 28
Donna Graul Sept. 16	Brian Nelson Sept. 30



Brittany & Ryan Wuebbles Sept. 2
Courtney & Jessie Davis Sept. 10
Kim & Shane Nollau Sept. 11
John & Lois Roach Sept. 15
Jordan Groennert & Katherine Pickerell-Groennert Sept. 16
Stan & Lois Clark Sept. 17



SEPTEMBER COUNCIL MEMBER ON DUTY

Lonna Patton



Virtual Worship Services

Virtual services continue for those wishing to attend. We want to make worship as convenient as possible for our members and the community. Please see our website or our Facebook page for the Zoom link.

- To call in with phone audio only, call
- **1-312-626-6799** and then the meeting ID:
 - **8436488110** followed by the pound sign.
 - Password, if needed, will be: **62293**

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Thanks to everyone who helped out in August with all of the prep work of sorting, moving, pricing, cleaning, arranging for the Rummage Sale:

- *Tim & Cheryl Bair*
- *Steve Feldmann*
- *Lisa Groennert*
- *Susan Heiser*
- *Laurie Henderson*
- *Elaine Hoffmann*
- *Joyce Kniepkamp*
- *Lonna Patton*
- *Billie Rinderer*
- *Kimberly Tremmel*
- *Laura Wesselmann*
- *Pehg Zeller*

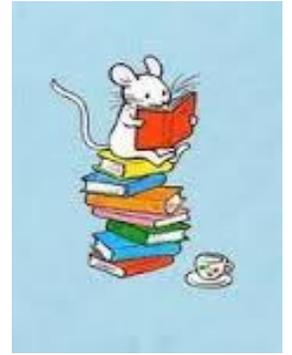


Thanks also to those who attended the Wurstmart meeting. Information regarding dates, prices, committee members and the Country Store is in this newsletter. If you have any questions, please see Jo-Allison Rogers. Once we get past the rummage sale we will have a sign-up sheet for the Wurstmart in the narthex.

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BOOK CLUB

The Book Club will be meeting September 10th at 1:00 PM to discuss *Culpability* by Bruce Holsinger.



Synopsis: A novel about a family of five (mom, dad, teen and tweens) who are in an accident in their autonomous minivan. During the family's recuperation after the accident, the family confronts some moral dilemmas triggered by the crash. *Culpability* is not only a family drama; it is also an exploration of the moral responsibility and ethical consequences of AI.

The Book Club will also be meeting in November regarding the book *The Music of Bees* by Eileen Gavin.

Synopsis: A novel about three lonely strangers (a new widow, a paraplegic teenager and a young out-of-work man with severe social anxiety) in a rural Oregon town who are each working through life's curveballs, and are brought together by happenstance on a local honeybee farm where they find surprising friendship, healing—and maybe even a second chance—just when they least expect it. This is a hopeful story about the power of chosen family.

These two books are in the library for checkout.

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Lunch dates:
Sept. 2, Oct. 7, Nov. 4 & Dec. 2 at 11:30 AM.
Come join us for an enjoyable meal with others. It's a time for great conversation, food and fellowship. Everyone is welcome!

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♥♥♥♥ Women's J.O.Y. Fellowship ♥♥♥♥

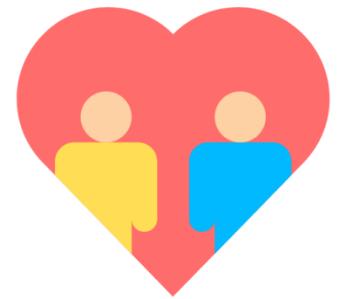
BROWN BAG INFORMATION: Thank you all for your help for a successful summer food program! The churches of Trenton served a little over 1,500 lunches this summer with St. John preparing 306 of those lunches. We had donations of \$375.00 this summer from our members and expenses of \$531.58. We also had a reimbursement last year from Clinton County Snack Pack Program to help cover expenses so we are left with a surplus of \$384.46 to start in June of 2026. We handed out an average of 31 lunches each day.

We are aware of these families through BCMW, a community action agency in Centralia which helps low income households and it would have been much harder on these families during the summer without our program. This continues to be a much needed service and we are so thankful that we can all come together, no matter our denomination and be the hands and feet of our Lord providing for those in need. Thank you to everyone who helped pack lunches and/or donated to the fund.



Totals for lunches in years past

2024 =	1,594
2023 =	1,933
2022 =	1,750
2021 =	2,296
2020 =	2,262
2019 =	1,163



Jenn Thompson, Director
Clinton County Snack Pack Program

IMPORTANT RUMMAGE SALE DATES

- Thursday, September 4** – Open from 5 PM – 8 PM (Full price)
- Friday, September 5** – Open from 9 AM – 1 PM (Full price) and 2 PM – 6 PM (Half price)
- Saturday, September 6** – Open from 9 AM – 1 PM (\$4 Brown Bag Sale)

Help will be needed for the four shifts of the Rummage sale on September 4, 5, and 6. Cashiers, floaters, upstairs managers, elevette operators, and clean up volunteers are needed desperately. A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex or you can call the office to sign up. Leave a message if there is no answer.



Rainbow Preschool News

Hello everyone, and warm greetings as we begin a fantastic new school year together! As you read this, our preschoolers have already completed three weeks of school, engaging in a variety of exciting projects. Students have taken part in activities such as counting, color-by-number worksheets, creating calendars for August and September, and practicing their cutting skills.

Our classroom is filled with laughter and curiosity as children adjust to daily routines. They are forming new friendships and reconnecting with friends from last year. Each day presents new opportunities for learning and creativity, whether exploring classroom centers, sharing stories during circle time, or working on group projects. Both Ms. Lisa and I encourage teamwork and kindnesses, helping every child feel valued at Rainbow.



We are delighted to welcome the following students to our Monday/Wednesday/Friday class:

Bailey S., Beckett R., Brody R., Brooks R., Floyd B., Grady L., Harper G., Henry G., Peter K., Scarlett E., Trevor L., Violet H., and Wrenleigh R.

We also welcome the students joining us on Tuesday/Thursday:

Aubrey B., Cameron W., Colton G., Delaney H., Erica F., Esther R., Everleigh B., Halstyn K., Harper W., Ivrey B., Lyle J., Mayzie K., Michael F., Reagan F., Rory D., Wrenley S., and ZuZu W.

Ms. Lisa is returning for her ninth year at Rainbow Preschool and will assist in both classes.

We thank Pastor Christy for visiting and reading to both classes. The students listened attentively, and we look forward to more visits and wonderful stories throughout the year. Thank you to our preschool board for their ongoing support and guidance as we start the year. We also appreciate everyone who contributed. Special thanks to the parents and grandparents for their patience during daily drop-offs and pick-ups.

Happy August birthdays to Grady L. on 8/27 and Camden W. on 8/28. The students enjoyed sharing the delicious snacks they brought in.

There are still a few open spots in the Monday/Wednesday/Friday class. If you know a family interested in joining Rainbow Preschool, please encourage them to contact me via email (rainbowpreschooltrentonil@gmail.com), through the church office, or by messaging our Facebook page.

A few reminders for the month:

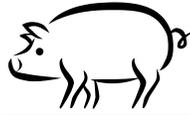
- If your child is absent, please email me or call the church to let us know.
- August book orders are due by Friday, August 29th. Orders can be placed online using our class code Y34JV.
- No school Monday, September 1st (Labor Day) and Friday, September 12th (Wesclin Teacher Institute).
- September tuition is due on Thursday, September 4th, and Friday, September 5th.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please email me.
- Check our Facebook page for daily updates and to see what our students are doing.

We are excited for the year ahead and look forward to creating a memorable and joyful experience for all our students and families.

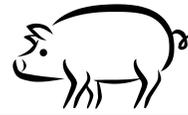
Misty Straeter, Rainbow Preschool Director



INFO FOR SUNDAY, OCT.5, 2025



WURSTMARKT



- Times for the dinner will be 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. It will be drive-thru only.
- Ticket price is \$15 per dinner.
- Beef will be the second selection of meat.
- Applesauce will be made on 2 days: **Saturday, September 20th beginning at 9 am**, (light lunch provided) and **Thursday, October 2nd at 10 am** (lunch provided.) It is recommended that you bring your own favorite knife with your name on it.
- Applesauce will be canned in pints and quarts. We will need mostly pint jars donated.
- Sign-up sheets for pie donations & applesauce/Wurstmarkt workers will be in the narthex.
- Workers are needed for preparation on **Saturday, October 4th at 8 am** and on **Sunday Oct. 5th**, the day of the dinner. Clean up will begin at 3:00 PM until finished.
- Workers needed: cooks, runners, baggers for carry outs, the drive thru and ticket sellers. (Please sign up for the area you would like to work or call the office at 224-9828.)
- **Only apple or cherry pies will be ordered from Berkemann's Bakery @ \$14.50 each.** Members can pay as they order them and each family is asked to donate 2 pies. A sign-up sheet will be in the narthex if you wish to order or if you wish to make your pies.
- We will have the quilt raffle along with the congregation's donated baskets and single items. We need to have all basket/single items at the church by **Wednesday, October 1st** in order to get them catalogued. We will also put pictures of the raffle items on Facebook and the website as they come in.

Committee members:

Jo-Allison Rogers – Chairman

Pehg Zeller – Co-chair, Raffle

Venmo Techs – Pastor Christy & Kimberly Tremmel

Margie Bopp – Co-chair, Raffle & Kitchen

Laurie Henderson & Bev Adams – Publicity

Tim Bair – Treasurer

For the drive-thru we will be using the alley and parking lot for two drive-through lanes as we did last year. It worked very well and customers handled it ok. We will be accepting payments by cash, check or Venmo.

All are encouraged to support this effort as the profit from the Wurstmarkt is very important for the budget of St John. Every member's contribution by their donation of time and basket items is deeply appreciated. As we come together for this annual tradition, may we grow stronger through the fellowship that will be felt throughout the work we do. At the annual meeting we will assess the Wurstmarkt for next year.

Country Store – We will have a Country Store on the day before the Wurstmarkt, Saturday, October 4, from 9 AM until noon. We will sell raw pork sausage and applesauce. Raffle tickets will be available for purchase. Tickets you have sold can be turned in that morning also. The Country Store will be out in front of the church under the portico with raffle ticket sales just inside the vestibule. We would appreciate donations of homemade craft items, so if you have something to contribute to the Country Store, please have non-perishable items to the church on **Thursday, October 2nd** (applesauce making day) and perishable items before 9:00 am on **Saturday, October 4.**

*****Thank you!*****

Daily Devotional by Matt Laney

[Jesus said to them,] “Stay awake! If the house owner knew when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and stood guard. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man comes at an unexpected hour.” - Matthew 24:42-44 (adapted)

In Plum Village, the monastery founded by Thich Nhat Hanh, I was taught to wash the dishes or clean the kitchen counter as if caring for a baby.

At first, it felt contrived. Eventually, something shifted. Giving loving attention to a tiny, fragile human can turn most anyone into an awakened being, if only for a moment, which is all we have.

Brother Lawrence, a 17th-century Carmelite monk, spoke of something similar. “The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer. In the noise and clutter of my kitchen...I possess God in tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament.” He also said, “Great have abandoned all particular forms of devotion, all prayer techniques. My only prayer practice is attention.”

Jesus urged his disciples to remain awake and alert to the arrival of the Holy, because the Eternal is not only present, the Eternal is presence itself. In my experience, the presence of the Eternal becomes available through the practice of loving attention.

If God ever feels out of reach, try going about your day as if carrying a sleeping infant. Few people act heedlessly or recklessly while holding a baby at rest. We naturally move more tranquilly and speak more gently. Our attention becomes more acute; our being is more reverent. In one unexpected moment, holiness arrives.

Stay alert. Love what you do. The Presence is literally at hand.

Prayer

Holy One, today may I strive for attention over perfection.



About the Author:

Matt Laney is co-Pastor of Virginia Highland Church UCC in Atlanta, GA and the author of *Pride Wars*, a fantasy series published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for Young Readers. The first two books, *The Spinner Prince* and *The Four Guardians* are available now. If you wish to subscribe to the Daily Devotional, go to www.ucc.org, click on Resources and then Daily Devotional.